THREE DISCOURSES ON ETERNITY,

AND THE

Importance and Advantages of looking-at *eternal Things.*

By JOB ORTON.

What is here written is designed for thy Help and Furtherance in a Meetness for future Blessedness. But if thou look on these Pages with a wanton rolling Eye, hunting for Novelties, or what may gratify a prurient Wit, a coy and squeamish Fancy; go, read a Romance, or some Piece of Drollery: Know, here's nothing for thy Turn; and dread to meddle with Matters of everlasting Concernment without a serious Spirit. Howe.

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PREFACE

TO THE

READER.

THE following Diſcourſes on a moſt weighty and intereſting Subject are recommended to your ſerious Peruſal. If you are not prone to forget Eternity amidſt the Cares and Amuſements of Life, and do not want to have your Mind more deeply impreſſed with its momentous Concerns, you

are a Chriſtian of diſtinguiſhed Eminence, and I congratulate your Happineſs. But ſuch a Character being as uncommon as it is glorious, you are probably conſcious, that you need to have your Mind ſtirred up by Way of Remembrance, concerning the Things that belong to your everlaſting Peace. If you are a Stranger to the Author, it ſignifies little to you, of what Party or Perſuaſion he is. Candidly believe him to be honeſt and well-meaning. Conſider, that Eternity is no Party-Subject, but the common

mon Concern of all Ages, Ranks and Denominations. It is very likely that ſome of his Reaſoning and Arguments upon a Subject, which hath its Difficulties, may not be clear and ſatisfactory to you; but you may perhaps meet with ſomething, at leaſt in the Reflections, which may do you good. You will not find theſe Diſcourſes ſo judicious, correct and elegant, as many others, which you may have read. The Author's Deſign was to come home to Men's Buſineſs and Boſoms. For this End, he hath waved rather

than ſtudied Ornaments; being ſenſible that a Sermon, like a Tool, may be poliſhed till it has no Edge. He has endeavoured to uſe ſuch plain and familiar Language, that even Readers of the loweſt Underſtanding may at once ſee and feel his Meaning. Defective as theſe Diſcourſes are, an Hour or two devoted to the Peruſal of them may afford you more Satisfaction, than the ſame Time ſpent in mere Amuſement, or in reading a better Book on a Subject of leſs Importance. In publiſhing them, the

the Author hath obliged many of his Friends who desired it; endeavoured to do a little good to his Fellow-Christians in his own Way; he hath commended them to the Blessing of GOD, *which hath already, in some Degree, attended them; and he chearfully leaves the Issue with him, without being very solicitous about the Reception they may meet with in the World. If you desire to profit by the Perusal of these Discourses, he intreats and hopes, that you will first lift*

up your Heart to GOD *in ſuch Language as this:*

'O GOD, *the Fountain* 'of *Wiſdom, Truth, and* 'Goodneſs; *the high and* 'lofty *One that inhabiteſt* 'Eternity, *whoſe Name is* 'holy; *graciouſly aſſiſt thy* 'Servant *to read theſe Diſ-* 'courſes *with a ſerious, at-* 'tentive *Mind; that I may* 'not *reſt in the Language* 'or *the Sentiment; in com-* 'mending *or condemning* 'them; *but may conſider* 'my *own Concern in them.* 'May *I read them as ad-* 'dreſſed *to my Conſcience;*

'and,

and, as far as what they contain appears agreeable to thine unerring Word, may I receive and ſubmit to it, as an Oracle of GOD, *and judge myſelf by it. Teach me, O* GOD *of all Grace, to profit by them; that the Time I ſpend in reading and meditating upon them may not be loſt. May they afford me preſent Inſtruction and laſting Benefit; and thus tend to increaſe my Glory and Felicity thro' Eternity. And may the Author of theſe Diſcourſes, and all others,*

'who ſincerely endeavour to
'promote the Welfare of
'immortal Souls, ſee ſome
'good Effect of their La-
'bours on Earth, and at
'length, by thy Grace, par-
'take with me of the Joys
'of thine eternal King-
'dom, thro' Jeſus Chriſt,
'our Mediator and Re-
'deemer. Amen.'

DIS-

DISCOURSE I.

2 Corinth. iv. 18. *latter Part.*

But the Things which are not ſeen, are ETERNAL.

While we look not at the Things which are ſeen, but at the Things which are not ſeen: for the Things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the Things which are not ſeen, are eternal.

WHEN Arch-biſhop *Leighton* was Miniſter of a Pariſh in *Scotland*, this Queſtion was aſked of the Miniſters at their provincial Meetings, 'If they preached the Duties of the Times?'

When it was found that Mr. *Leighton* did not, and he was blamed for the Omiſſion, he anſwered, *If all the Brethren have preached to the* Times, *may not one poor Brother be ſuffered to preach on* Eternity *? In moſt Ages of the Church, there has been too much Reaſon to complain, that chriſtian Miniſters have dwelt more than they ought upon Subjects of comparatively ſmall Importance. They have too much neglected the momentous Concerns of *Eternity*; or not treated of them with that Plainneſs, Seriouſneſs, and deep Impreſſion of their Importance, which they ought to have done. Ye are Witneſſes, my Friends, and

* Select Works of Abp. *Leighton*. Pref. p. 11.

and GOD alſo, that I have often laid theſe moſt intereſting Themes before you; and inſtead of amuſing you with Trifles, am wholly directing my Miniſtrations to your eternal Salvation: and this I will do, while Providence gives me Opportunity, as your Souls are very dear to me, and as I deſire to give ſuch an Account of my Fidelity, as will be comfortable to myſelf, and acceptable to him, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. With this View it is proper ſometimes to lay before you a large and diſtinct Repreſentation of the Nature of that State and World, to which we are all haſting: and as I am perſuaded, that no Topick is more ſuited to *the Times*, to reſtrain the Licentiouſneſs of this giddy, thoughtleſs,

leſs, luxurious Age, give me Leave again to direct your Attention to it. My Deſign at this Time is, to diſcourſe to you, as ſeriouſly and plainly as I poſſibly can, concerning *Eternity*; the moſt weighty and awful Word in the whole Compaſs of Language; a Word, which we often hear, but its vaſt Meaning and Importance, none of us, I fear, ſufficiently conſider.

The Apoſtle is, in the Context, telling the *Corinthians*, what it was that ſupported his Mind under all his Afflictions and Perſecutions; and that was, the Hope and Proſpect of a bleſſed Immortality, for which they tended to prepare him. This was what he *looked at*, aimed at and purſued: and the Reaſon of his

intenſely

intenſely looking at it and ſolicitouſly purſuing it was, that *the Things which are ſeen*, the Objects of Senſe, and which this World preſents to our View, *are temporal* or temporary, of ſhort and uncertain Continuance: *but the Things which are not ſeen*, which are not the Objects of Senſe, but of Faith, *are eternal*. I propoſe, by divine Aſſiſtance,

I. To illuſtrate, in a few Words, the general Nature of *Eternity*.

II. To conſider it, with particular Application to our own Souls, their immortal Nature, and future *eternal* State.

And then endeavour, which is my chief Deſign, to impreſs theſe Things

Things upon your Hearts and my own, by ſuitable Reflections, Exhortations and Motives.—— *The Things which are not ſeen are eternal.—Eternal!* what a loud Alarm does this give to the Soul! and how ſhould it awaken the Conſcience of every Hearer! Surely, Sirs, if any Subject deſerves your compoſed and ſerious Attention, this doth; and may God accompany it with his Bleſſing! I am,

I. To illuſtrate the general Nature of *Eternity.*

But who can explain it? who can comprehend it? We are quickly loſt in the Contemplation of ſo amazing a Subject, and the Underſtanding of an Angel would faint under the mighty Taſk,

Taſk. Bear then with my Weakneſs, Brethren, while, out of a pure Concern for your Happineſs, I ſay a little in my poor imperfect Way about it.—*Eternity* is Duration without Limits. What hath no Beginning and no End is, properly ſpeaking, *eternal*. There are ſome Creatures in the Univerſe, which have a Beginning and an End; as the whole brutal Creation. There are ſome Beings which had a Beginning, but ſhall have no End: ſuch are Angels and the Spirits of Men. Theſe are properly everlaſting, but not eternal, tho' that Word is ſometimes applied to them both in Scripture and common Language. There is one Being in the Univerſe, who is ſtrictly and properly *eternal*, and

no

no other Being but himſelf, is or can be ſo: even the ever bleſſed and adorable GOD. There never was a Time, when he was not. His Duration is not capable of being meaſured by any Periods of Time, ever ſo often repeated and multiplied. I ſhall not enter into that Queſtion, with which ſome learned Men have perplexed themſelves, and their Readers, whether the divine *Eternity* be ſucceſſive or inſtantaneous! whether it be a real Duration, or only one ſingle Point or Inſtant. It is ſufficient for us to know, that He is *eternal*, according to the beſt Idea we can gain of the Meaning of that Word: and that his infinite Mind comprehends at one View, every Thing paſt, preſent and future in every Period,

and

and Inſtant of his eternal Duration. He is repreſented to us, in the Scriptures, as *the ſame, from everlaſting and to everlaſting*; as the *uncorruptible* GOD; *who only hath Immortality*; *who was, and is, and is to come*; *the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity.* "We have "not indeed, a poſitive, ade- "quate and comprehenſive View "of *Eternity*; no created Being "hath ſo; it is the Prerogative of "the infinite and eternal Mind. "But we can conceive of it af- "ter an obſcure and inadequate "Manner. Our Conception of "it is ſomewhat like the Survey "a Man takes of the Ocean "from on board a Ship ſailing "in the midſt of it. He ſees the "Ocean, tho' not the whole "Ocean; and, where his Sight

"is

" is terminated by its own " Weakneſs, can perceive that " the Ocean extends further than " he can ſee. Conceive a Moun- " tain of Sand riſing up to the " Stars; tho' this amazing Heap " be ſuppoſed to waſte but a ſin- " gle Grain every Million of " Years, it will in Time be ex- " hauſted, and ſink down to a " Level; but *Eternity* will never, " never be all ſpent; when in- " numerable Ages have run out, " it will be as far from ending as " ever, becauſe indeed it hath no " End.*" Our Thoughts are loſt and our Spirits overwhelmed, when we ſet ourſelves to contem- plate how great, weighty and ex- tenſive a Thing *Eternity* is. But we can form an Idea of it ſuffici- ent

* Grove's Works, Vol. 1. p 49.

ent to anſwer all moral and religious Purpoſes; and that is enough. Let us now,

II. Conſider *Eternity*, with particular Application to our own Souls, their immortal Nature, and future everlaſting State.

Our Souls are unſeen Things, and the World to which they go is an unſeen World; and nothing will be more uſeful to us than to reflect, that they are everlaſting.

1. Our Souls are immortal or everlaſting.

Man conſiſteth of two Parts; the one groſs, viſible and material, which is the Body: the other ſpiritual, unſeen and immaterial, and this is the Soul or Spirit: ſo we call that Principle, which

which animates the Body; which is capable of thinking, reflecting, comparing and chuſing; of looking back to what has been, and forward to what ſhall be, and reaſoning upon both. Theſe Souls GOD formed; for he is *the Father of Spirits* (a). There was a Time when they were not; when their Exiſtence began: ſo that, properly ſpeaking, they are not eternal; but they are everlaſting. This mortal Life has a Beginning and End. The exiſtence of the Soul had a Beginning, but it ſhall have no End. This is argued from the very Nature of the Soul, ſo greatly different from the Nature of the Body. The Soul does not derive its Being from the Body, nor depend upon the State of

(a) Heb. xii. 9.

of the Body for its Continuance in Being. It is a ſimple, unmixed, indiviſible Principle: being immaterial it muſt be incorruptible and immortal: not being compounded of Parts, as the Body is, it cannot be diſſolved. We argue the Exiſtence and Activity of the Soul, after the Death of the Body, from its Powers and Faculties, its Capacity of extending its Views into Futurity, which the Brutes can not; as well as feeling ſuch Joys and Sorrows, Hopes and Fears, as they do not. It has an earneſt Deſire of Continuance in Being, and a Dread of Annihilation and Deſtruction. Now, it can hardly be thought, that its wiſe and good Creator would have implanted theſe Capacities and Inclinations in it, had

had it not been deſigned for an immortal Duration. The Powers of Conſcience, and that Dread of a future State, which Guilt occaſions in all, are juſtly reckoned ſtanding Proofs of its Immortality. The unequal Diſtribution of Good and Evil in the preſent State, according to the real Character of rational Beings and moral Agents, plainly ſpeaks an Hereafter. And indeed, this was the general Sentiment of the heathen World, and appears to be the Dictate of Nature. Tho' the Heathen diſcovered the Exiſtence of the Soul, and a State of Rewards and Puniſhments after Death, yet ſome of them doubted, whether that State would be everlaſting, and the reſt were much in the dark about it; not

to

to mention the Caſe of thoſe few who denied it. But, on a Point of ſo much Importance, the Scriptures give us the cleareſt Light, and ſolve every reaſonable Doubt. The ſacred Writers do not ſet themſelves directly to prove the everlaſting Duration of the Soul; but ſeem to take it for granted, as an obvious, allowed Principle; juſt as they do the Exiſtence of GOD. The Immortality of the Soul is a Principle, on which all the divine Diſpenſations are founded. Nevertheleſs they aſſert it in a Variety of Places; and it will be proper to mention a few of them, that our Faith in this important Article may ſtand on a firm Foundation.——Our Lord argues the future Exiſtence of the Soul againſt the *Sadducees*, who

denied it, from GOD's calling himſelf the GOD of *Abraham* and *Iſaac* and *Jacob* many Years after their Death; for GOD, ſaith he, *is not a* GOD *of the Dead, but of the living; for all live unto him* (b). The Old Teſtament-Writers in many Places ſpeak of it: particularly *Solomon*, when he ſaith, *The Righteous hath Hope in his Death* (c): when *the Duſt returneth to the Earth as it was, the Spirit ſhall return unto* GOD, *who gave it.* He makes an obſervable Diſtinction between the Spirit of Brutes and of Men; *Who knoweth the Spirit of Man, that goeth upward, and the Spirit of the Beaſt that goeth downward to the Earth* (d)! And that the Spirits

(b) Luke xx. 38. (c) Prov. xiv. 32.
(d) Eccles. xii. 7. iii. 21.

rits of Men are immortal, ſeems to be intimated by *David*, when he ſaith, *at thy right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore:* and, when *my Fleſh and my Heart faileth,* GOD *is the Strength of my Heart and my Portion for ever* (e). But we have clearer Proofs of this in the new Teſtament. Our Lord aſſerts, that, tho' Men may kill the Body, they cannot *kill the Soul* (f). If the Soul died with the Body, or ceaſed to think and act after Death, they might kill the Soul as well as the Body. He likewiſe aſſerts, that in the future World Men can *die no more, for they are,* in Immortality *equal to the Angels* (g). The Apoſtles ſpeak of *being uncloathed, putting off the Body,*

(e) Pſalm xvi. 11. lxxiii. 26.
(f) Luke. xii. 4. (g)—xx. 36.

dy, or the *Tabernacle* or Tent, in which the Soul reſides; which no more involves the Death of the Soul, than putting off his Cloaths involves the Death of a Man. They ſpeak of *giving up the Ghoſt*, or yielding up the Spirit; of *the Spirits* of wicked Men being *in Priſon*, and *the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*. There are many Paſſages, which more directly prove the Immortality of the Soul, but they will be mentioned under the next Head.——GOD is eternal by an abſolute Neceſſity of Nature; but Man's Immortality is of free Grace; becauſe he has forfeited his Life and Being by Sin. Nevertheleſs it muſt be, as far as we can judge, the immediate Act of GOD to deſtroy the Exiſtence of Souls; ſince they

appear

appear to have no internal Principle of Decay and Corruption, and no created Power ſeems able to put an End to their Being. But the Word of GOD aſſures us of their Immortality; that they ſhall live for ever; and therefore, according to the common Uſage of the Word, they may be called *eternal*.—It may not be improper, in this Connection, to remind you, that when the Scriptures ſpeak of Man's dying like the Beaſts, having no Pre-eminence over them; of there being no Wiſdom nor Knowledge in the Grave; of the Incapacity of the Dead to praiſe GOD, and the like, they only refer to the Body; its being incapable of Action and Enjoyment, and having no more Concern with the Affairs of this World.

2. The State, to which our Souls remove at Death, is an eternal, unchangeable State.

The preſent State is deſcribed in the Scriptures, as a State of Trial; and when the Time of human Life is ended, the Soul of every Man is removed to that State, for which it was fitted, by the Diſpoſitions it contracted, and the Manner in which it behaved here. There is no foundation in the Word of GOD for the popiſh Doctrine of *Purgatory*; or a Place in which thoſe Souls, whoſe Virtues are leſs perfect than the Standard of the romiſh Church, go thro' a Courſe of Purgation to fit them for Heaven; and from this Diſcipline they are re-

releaſed by the Prayers and Offerings of the living; a Notion artfully contrived and adapted to gratify the Covetouſneſs and Ambition of the romiſh Prieſts. The Scriptures ſpeak of two States only, a State of Happineſs and Miſery; the former to be enjoyed in Heaven; the latter to be endured in Hell; and each of theſe States is repreſented, as of *eternal* Duration. It muſt therefore be of the greateſt Importance, that we ſeriouſly conſider them in this Light.

The Happineſs of Heaven is *eternal*.

Holy Souls, when they are taken out of this World, are admitted to Paradiſe; which is undoubtedly a State of Glory and Happineſs, tho' not equal to that

which they ſhall enjoy after the Reſurrection. Then they ſhall be fixed in Heaven, in the more immediate Preſence of GOD, where there are the brighteſt Diſplays of his Glory, and ſhall enjoy compleat and everlaſting Happineſs (h). This State is deſcribed in a Variety of Phraſes and Figures, in order to give us the moſt exalted Idea of its Dignity and Felicity; and the principal Streſs is laid upon this, that it is an *eternal* State. Thus, we frequently read of *eternal Life*; particularly in that gracious Promiſe of our Lord, I give unto my Sheep *eternal* Life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my Hand. The Redemption, which Chriſt obtained for them that

(h) Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 2—5.

that obey him, is called an *eternal*, Redemption; and that Salvation, which is in Chriſt Jeſus, is ſaid to be with *eternal* Glory. The Houſe to which good Men ſhall be removed, is *eternal* in the Heavens. The Kingdom which they ſhall poſſeſs, is an *everlaſting* Kingdom. The Crown, which ſhall be given them, is an *incorruptible* Crown, a Crown of Glory, *that fadeth not away*. Their future Inheritance is *incorruptible and fadeth not away*. The Bodies of the Saints ſhall be raiſed *incorruptible*, and this mortal muſt put on *Immortality*. When the Apoſtle is, in the Context, deſcribing that Happineſs, for which their light and ſhort Afflictions prepared them, he calls it, *a far more exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glo-*

ry. It is ſaid of the heavenly World, that there ſhall be *no more Death*; that there GOD's Servants ſhall ſerve him and reign *for ever and ever*; that they ſhall be made Pillars there, and *ſhall go no more out*; and they ſhall *ever* be with the Lord. Further, Chriſt, who is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, and who lives for evermore, hath aſſured all his faithful Servants, that, *becauſe he lives they ſhall live alſo*; their Being and Happineſs ſhall be ſecured by him, and be as laſting as his own.——And indeed the Diſpoſitions and Habits which good Men contract here, and the religious Exerciſes in which they delight, qualify them for endleſs Happineſs. They are capable of reliſhing the Joys of Heaven: and

and as that is a State, in which there will be no Temptation to ſin, but every deſirable Advantage for Improvement in Holineſs, we may reaſonably conclude, that they will never forfeit the divine Favour; but be making conſtant Improvements. It ſeems therefore ſuitable to the Holineſs and Goodneſs of GOD to continue the Exiſtence of ſuch pious uſeful Creatures, tho' his Word did not ſo frequently and clearly aſſure us, that their Happineſs ſhall be everlaſting.——On the other Hand,

The Miſery of Hell is *eternal.*

Thoſe who have lived in Rebellion againſt GOD and Diſobedience to the Goſpel of his Son, and have died impenitent and un-

newed, are removed to a State of Miſery and Torment, in an infernal Priſon; and, at the Judgment of the great Day, ſhall be condemned to continue in the ſame, or a worſe, Place for ever. This is the Language of the Scriptures of Truth. Our Lord ſtrongly aſſerts it, when, ſpeaking of Hell, he calls it, *the Fire that never ſhall be quenched: where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.* And this he repeats four Times in the following Verſes, with a ſpecial Accent on the Duration of it (i). His Apoſtles preached the ſame awful Doctrine. St. *Paul* ſaith, They *that know not* GOD, *and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting De-*

(i) Mark ix. 43—49.

Deſtruction (k). St. *Jude* ſpeaks of the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and the Cities about them, as *ſuffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire* (l).—— To ſuch Paſſages certain Writers have objected, that the Words *eternal* and *for ever* ſometimes ſignify a limited Duration; or a preciſe Time, whoſe Limits are to us unknown; and therefore they may do ſo in this Caſe. I allow that in ſome Places, eſpecially in the old Teſtament, they muſt ſignify a limited Duration; therefore the Nature of the Subjects, concerning which they are uſed, muſt be conſidered; and when they are applied to the human Soul or ſuperior Spirits, whoſe Nature is immortal, (as is the Caſe in almoſt every Place of the new Teſtament

(k) 2 Theſſ. i. 9. (l) Jude v. 7.

ament where the Words tranſlated *everlaſting*, *eternal*, and *for ever and ever* occur,) they muſt be taken in their utmoſt Extent. This may be argued from other Places, where the Eternity of future Miſery is ſet forth; and from obſerving, (and it is to be carefully conſidered) that the ſame Language is uſed to expreſs the Continuance of the Happineſs of the righteous, and the Miſery of the wicked. Thus, our Lord, having deſcribed the Solemnities of the future Judgment, ſaith, *Theſe*, i. e. the wicked, ſhall go away into *everlaſting Puniſhment*; *but the Righteous into Life eternal* (m). The original Word is the ſame with regard to the State of both, tho' our Tranſlators have without Ne-

(m) Mat. xxv. 46.

Neceſſity rendered it differently. There ſeems no Reaſon, therefore, to believe, that the ſame Words, ſtanding in ſo cloſe a Connection and applied to the ſame Subject, ſhould expreſs two ſuch different Ideas, as an everlaſting, and a limited Duration. This is what I lay the principal Streſs upon in this Argument: and it is confirmed by obſerving, that the Apoſtle *John* uſeth the ſame Words to expreſs the Puniſhment of the Wicked, as he uſeth to expreſs the Eternity of GOD, of Chriſt, and the Happineſs of the Righteous, which all allow to be an endleſs Duration. Thus, ſpeaking of GOD, he ſaith, *who liveth for ever and ever*, or to Ages of Ages. He repreſents Chriſt, as ſaying to him, *I am alive*

alive for evermore; and ſaith, *his Servants ſhall reign for ever and ever*. Now he uſes the ſame Phraſe concerning the Miſery of the Wicked: ſpeaking of the Worſhippers of the Beaſt and his Image, and thoſe who receive his Mark, he ſaith, *the ſame ſhall be tormented with Fire and Brimſtone, in the Preſence of the holy Angels, and in the Preſence of the Lamb: and the Smoke of their Torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no reſt, Day nor Night.* Again, *the Devil, that deceived them, was caſt into the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, where the Beaſt and the falſe Prophet are, and they ſhall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever* (n). This is ſo ſtrong a Phraſe,

(n) Compare Rev. iv. 9, 10. v. 14. i. 18. xxii. 5. with xiv. 11. xx. 10.

Phraſe, that if it does not ſignify a proper everlaſting Duration, there is no Paſſage in the Scriptures that doth. I muſt therefore, upon the whole, leave you to judge, whether the new Teſtament doth not declare, in a Variety of the moſt ſignificant Phraſes, that the Miſery of the Wicked ſhall be *eternal*.—Yet if theſe Declarations were not ſo full and expreſs, it would be difficult to ſay, how it could be otherwiſe. The Souls of Men are immortal: They carry out of this World the ſame Diſpoſitions and Habits, which they contracted here. Now Miſery is the natural Effect and Conſequence of Sin; and their Miſery muſt be uninterrupted, becauſe there will be nothing, in that Place of Torment, to divert the Attention

tion of the Soul and afford it any Eaſe. A Senſe of having loſt Heaven, and that Diſſatisfaction, Vexation, and Remorſe, which the guilty Conſcience muſt feel, would make the Soul miſerable, wherever it was fixed, and without any poſitive Puniſhment from the Almighty. And this Miſery muſt continue, unleſs GOD were to annihilate, or utterly to deſtroy, the Soul, which I ſee no Reaſon to believe he will. An eaſy Senſe of the Words, *Death*, *Deſtruction* and *the ſecond Death* may be given without ſuppoſing an Extinction of Being, and very conſiſtent with the many ſtrong Expreſſions of the *Eternity* of future Miſery. Such Words, I apprehend, denote the entire Loſs and Abſence of all Goodneſs, Eaſe, Happineſs and Hope.

Hope. So, a State of Sin and a State of Miſery are often called *Death* and *Deſtruction* in the Scriptures (o). There is no Proſpect, that this Miſery will produce Amendment, ſince the fallen Angels, who have been many thouſand Years under the divine Diſpleaſure, continue impenitent and obſtinate; and (as St. *Jude* obſerves) *are reſerved in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day* (p) *.—But ſome have ſuggeſted, that "it may be "con-

(o) Compare Hoſ. xiii. 1. Rom. vii. 10. Prov. xvii. 19. Eph. ii. 1, 5, &c.

(p) Jude *v.* 6.

* The Word here rendered *everlaſting* is applied to the divine Being by St. *Paul*, Rom. i. 20. *his eternal Power*, and has not the ſame Ambiguity as the former Word is ſuppoſed to have, which is, I think, a Confirmation of the Argument.

" conſiſtent with the Faithfulneſs
" of GOD to diſpenſe with his
" Threatnings, and leſſen the
" Duration of future Miſery, tho'
" theſe Threatnings ſeem to refer
" to an everlaſting Puniſhment."
But I apprehend, it would be inconſiſtent with his Wiſdom, Veracity and Faithfulneſs to remit the Penalty, when his Threatnings are ſo expreſs and unconditional, and their Time of Trial is ended. This Opinion is directly confuted by the Apoſtle, who ſaith, *if we believe not*, or are unfaithful, *yet he abideth faithful*; *he cannot deny himſelf*, by acting contrary to his repeated ſolemn Declarations(q). Beſides, this Argument ſuppoſes, that ſome Men know more of GOD's ſecret Purpoſes

(q) 2 Tim. ii. 13.

oſes, than he intended they hould, and ſo reflects highly upn his Wiſdom and Honour. He eſigned that we ſhould believe, e will execute his Threatnings, ut they have diſcovered that he ill not. The Objectors may ink themſelves wiſe in making is Diſcovery; *yet*, as the Prohet *Iſaiah* obſerves, *He alſo is iſe, and will bring evil, and will t call back his Words* (r).—We annot judge, what important nds may be anſwered with Reard to the whole rational Creaon, by the eternal Miſery of the amned; who may be very few, ompared with the great Multiude, which no Man can numer, of GOD's holy and happy reatures: and therefore we muſt not

(r) Iſa. xxxi. 2.

not take upon us positively to determine, that the Duration of their Misery cannot be *eternal*, tho' the Passages in Question were more obscure and doubtful, than they are. I shall conclude this Head in the Words of Dr. *Lucas*. "Methinks, before one should "venture on Sin, which is threatned with Misery; pure and "unallayed, complicated, accumulated Misery; Misery unalterable, incurable and lasting "as long as Eternity, it were "reasonable to be very sure, that "the Notion of a Hell were "false, and the Doctrine of *eternal* Punishment a mere Bugbear. Nay, I protest, in a Matter of this Importance, I think "one should scarce trust to a "Demonstration, unless it had

"passed

'passed the Test of the most so-
'lid and impartial Part of Man-
'kind, and stood the Shock and
'Trial of many Ages *."

I cannot, in this Discourse, make so large and particular an Application of this weighty Subject as it deserves. I shall hereafter urge upon your Minds a serious, constant Regard to Eternity; or in the Language of the Apostle, to look not at the Things which are seen and temporal, but those, which are not seen and eternal. In the mean Time, let me exhort and intreat you, to reflect upon what has been said, and daily to fix your Thoughts upon the wonderful Weight and Importance of *Eternity*. Think of those two widely different States, which

* Lucas on Happiness, V. 2. Sect. ii. Ch. 3.

which I have been deſcribing, and the *eternal* Duration of both. Think of that endleſs, boundleſs State, to which the Souls of Men remove; that State which admits of no Change, nor Pauſe, nor Period for ever. It is *Eternity*, my Brethren, it is *Eternity*, that puts Weight into unſeen Things; into the Glories and Joys of Heaven, into the Miſeries and Torments of the Damned. Heaven would, comparatively, be no Heaven; and Hell, comparatively, no Hell, had not each *Eternity* in it. And will you not think of this? Time, with its ever-flowing Stream, is bearing you away to the boundleſs Ocean of *Eternity*: And will you not think to which of theſe States you are going? There is no third. Will you de-

fer

fer the Thought till hereafter and ſay, "ſome Time hence I "will conſider it?" Alas, long before that Time comes, yea before another Sabbath, or another Day, you may be in *Eternity*; and then it will be too late to conſider it. You have each of you a Soul within you, that will live for ever; that is capable of inconceivable Joy or Torment; and in the one, or the other, it muſt live for ever. Can I poſſibly ſay, or you think of, any Thing of greater Moment? *O that you were wiſe, that you underſtood this, that you would conſider your latter End!* (s).

(s) Deut. xxxii. 29.

DISCOURSE II.

2 Corinthians iv. - 18.

But the Things which are not ſeen, are ETERNAL.

HISTORY relates, that when *Xerxes*, King of *Perſia*, looked round on his vaſt Army, he could not forbear burſting into Tears to think, that within leſs than a hundred Years, every one of them would be dead. There his Views ſtopped. But it is much more affecting to a chriſtian Miniſter, who conſiders Things in the Light of the Goſpel, when he looks round on a nu-

numerous Congregation, to reflect, that every human Creature before him is an immortal Creature; and that each of the Living, who compoſe that Aſſembly, will, in a few Years, be not only numbered with the Dead, but fixed in an eternal, unalterable State. It muſt increaſe the Awfulneſs of the Thought to ſuppoſe, that, notwithſtanding all his Care and Concern, all the Fidelity of his Admonitions and the Warmth of his Perſuaſions and Intreaties, it is probable that ſome of them will fall into everlaſting Deſtruction. For where is the Aſſembly which conſiſts entirely of thoſe, who have paſſed from Death to Life, are the Children of GOD and the Heirs of Heaven? How few appear to act in good earneſt for

another World! How many ſeem entirely unconcerned about it! With theſe affecting Thoughts deeply impreſſed upon my Heart, I have been lately diſcourſing to you, my dear Brethren, concerning *Eternity*; and am now to reſume the Subject, with a humble Hope, that, thro' the divine Bleſſing, it will be effectual to reſcue ſome Soul from Deſtruction, and direct it in the Way to everlaſting Life.——In the former Diſcourſe I attempted to illuſtrate the general Nature of *Eternity:* I then conſidered it with a particular Reference to our Souls, and laid before you thoſe Evidences of their *Immortality*, which appear to me moſt ſatisfactory; and thoſe Proofs, with which the Scriptures furniſh us, of

of the *eternal Duration* of future Happineſs and Miſery. I ſhall now endeavour to impreſs theſe Things upon your Hearts and my own by a ſuitable Application, in the following

REFLECTIONS.

1. How great are our Obligations to GOD, and the Redeemer, for diſcovering *eternal* Things to us, and making Proviſion for our eſcaping *everlaſting* Miſery, and obtaining *everlaſting* Life!

The future World is an unſeen World; therefore we are prone to forget it, or to be too little impreſſed with its Concerns. To remedy this Evil, GOD hath

given us his Word, and therein favoured us with a clear Account of the Nature of our Souls, and the *eternal* State, to which they are going. The wiſeſt Philoſophers among the *Heathen* were much in the dark about unſeen Things. They had ſtrong Deſires of Immortality; and many of them juſtly argued the future Exiſtence of the Soul from ſuch Deſires: but they knew little of the Length of that Exiſtence, or the Nature of future Bliſs and Woe. The Vulgar were amuſed with many Tales and Fables concerning them; dreſſed up indeed in elegant Language by their Poets, but only fitted to give them wrong Notions of a future State, and had very little Tendency to promote the Intereſt of Virtue.

The

The Ideas which the *Jews* had of the future State were very obſcure; and there was one Sect among them, the *Sadducees*, who, as St. *Luke* tells us, aſſerted, *that there is no Reſurrection neither Angel nor Spirit* (a), in which they fell ſhort of many Heathen Philoſophers. But St. *Paul* obſerves, that our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt *hath brought Life and Immortality to light thro' the Goſpel* (b). He hath removed the Veil, that was upon the other World, and thrown a Light upon its different Regions. We are not left to precarious Conjectures, what becomes of the Soul, when it leaves the Body; into what State it enters, and how long it ſhall endure. We are plainly aſſured,

(a) Acts xxiii. 8. (b) 2 Tim. i. 10.

that the Soul is immortal, and ſhall be happy or miſerable for ever. This is expreſſed in Language ſo plain, that a Child may underſtand it; and yet, as Hope and Fear are the great Springs of the Soul, which ſet it in Motion, theſe awful Scenes are deſcribed in the moſt ſublime and affecting Manner. All the Force of Language is employed to paint them out, in order to ſtrike our dull Minds, and make abiding Impreſſions on our treacherous Memories. It is kind and gracious in GOD to give us ſo many noble Deſcriptions of the Joys of Heaven, to allure us to our Duty; ſo many awful Views of the Miſery of Hell, to deter us from Sin; and all prove little enough to anſwer theſe important Ends. It

ſhews

ſhews the infinite Value of the Goſpel and our immenſe Obligations to GOD for it, that it makes theſe Diſcoveries; and, which is yet more important, gives us the plaineſt Directions, how we may eſcape the Wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal Life. Tho' Reaſon is capable of diſcovering unſeen Things, yet it could never give us any ſatisfactory Evidence, how the eternal Well-being of Souls, which had contracted Guilt here, could be ſecured. Not all the Treaſures of the World, nor the whole Circle of Science, could deliver us from the Guilt of one Sin, free us from one of the Almighty's Terrors, or give us one well-grounded Hope. 'Bleſſed, for ever bleſſed, therefore, be the GOD

and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath begotten us again to a lively Hope.'——Let us likewiſe reflect with fervent Gratitude on our Obligations to a gracious Redeemer, by whom theſe important Diſcoveries of a future World are made unto us; aud who alſo gave himſelf for us to redeem us from all Iniquity, the Wages of which is Death, and to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers. How aſtoniſhing is that Love, which diſpoſed him to ſhed his precious Blood for Sinners, that they might not *eternally* periſh, but have *everlaſting* Life; through whom we are not appointed to Wrath, but to obtain *eternal* Salvation! Think, my Fellow-Chriſtians, frequently and ſeriouſly

ouſly think, that Jeſus gave his Life a Ranſom for us. By his meritorious Sufferings, by his atoning Sacrifice, an honourable Way is made for our Deliverance from the Wrath to come: and in Conſequence of this, the righteous Governor of the World can receive penitent Sinners to Favour and Happineſs, without Danger of his Juſtice being impeached, or his Authority ſlighted. By the aſſiſting Grace and ever prevailing Interceſſion of Chriſt, we hope to obtain the Inheritance he hath purchaſed. It cannot be doubted, that He, who died for his Servants, will conduct them thro' the Dangers and Difficulties of Life, deliver them from every evil Work, and preſerve them to his heavenly King-

dom. To him be Glory for ever and ever: and Thanks, ardent, everlasting Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable Gift.

2. What Folly and Madness are Men chargeable with, for neglecting *eternal* Concerns!

When we observe how Men behave, one would imagine, they looked upon these Things not to be so much as Conjectures, but evident Falshoods; and thought they should either die like the Brutes, or, if they survived, that GOD had no Wrath for them to fear, and no Mercy for them to desire. Look into the Conduct of Mankind, even of professing Christians, and you will see, that visible and *temporal* Things appear

pear to them moſt weighty; unſeen and *eternal* Things, moſt trifling. They are eagerly ſolicitous to provide for their frail dying Bodies, and to heap up Wealth, which they cannot carry with them, but take no Care, or very little Care, of the nobler Part of their Nature, their never-dying Souls. They are, every Day, laying up for Years to come, but take no Thought for *Eternity*; tho' every thing elſe is buſy Idleneſs, laborious Sloth, and wretched, miſchievous Impertinence. They have no Notion of the Value of Time, any further than as their worldly Intereſt depends upon it. They are diligent in trading, but negligent in praying. Their Shop-Books are duly poſted, and their Accounts

with

with Men ſtated and balanced; but they ſeldom conſult the Book of GOD, in order to know what they muſt do to eſcape *eternal* Wrath; and have never enquired, how Accounts ſtand between GOD and their immortal Souls. Yea, ſome who have lived ſixty, and ſeventy Years, and know that *Eternity* cannot be far off, have, it is to be feared, never in their whole Lives, ſpent one ſerious Hour in enquiring into the Nature and State of their Souls, and what Preparation is neceſſary for *Eternity*. There are other Perſons, leſs buſy about temporal Concerns, but equally ſlothful and careleſs about eternal ones. They waſte that precious Time in unneceſſary Sleep, or Recreation, which was given them

them to improve for *Eternity*. They contrive a thouſand Methods to kill Time, and are thankful to any one for an Expedient to paſs it off. They waſte thoſe Hours in publick Houſes, Clubs and gay Aſſemblies, in Gaming and Amuſement, which ſhould be employed in ſtudying their Bibles in the Devotions of the Family and Cloſet, and in doing Good to Mankind. They waſte GOD's ſacred Time, as well as their own; and will not devote even the ſhort Interval of a Sabbath to ſecure their *eternal* Happineſs. Such is the State of the Generality of Mankind. They go on in their Buſineſs or their Diverſions without any ſeeming Concern. They lie down, and riſe up on the Brink of Hell, and yet are ſecure

and

and fearleſs. *The Life everlaſting* is indeed an Article of their Creed, which they often repeat, and even in the immediate Preſence of GOD. They hear of an *eternal* Heaven and Hell every Sabbath, when they can find Time for publick Worſhip; yet continue as unmoved, as if it was nothing to them. Sometimes, if you addreſs them very ſeriouſly on theſe weighty Subjects, they ſtare and ſeem aſtoniſhed; perhaps they are a little alarmed, and begin to think there is ſomething in them. But when the Sermon is done, or the friendly Monitor retired, they return to their Negligence and Folly again. Thus wretchedly does the Deceitfulneſs of Sin harden Men's Hearts. They ſeem to be proof againſt

againſt the Terrors of the Lord and the Grace of the Goſpel. The Blood of Chriſt ſhed for Souls, the ſtrivings of the Spirit with them, the Warnings of Conſcience, the Admonitions of Friends, the Addreſſes and Prayers of Miniſters, have no abiding Effect on their ſtupid ſenſeleſs Spirits. They forget that, while they trifle, Time paſſeth on; and, while they ſlumber, their Damnation ſlumbereth not. Thus they go on, in a Round of Folly and Impertinence, till their Foot ſlippeth in ſome dreadful Moment, and they are loſt for ever.—And now what can we ſay to theſe Things, but take up the mournful Lamentation of *Solomon*, *The Heart of the Sons of Men is full of Evil; and Madneſs is in their Heart*

while

while they live, and after that they go to the dead (c)?—*Eternity!* little do careleſs Souls think, how much is contained in that one awful Word. May the Lord forgive us, that we ſee ſo much of this Folly and Madneſs, and no more lament it! That we do not more tenderly pity periſhing Souls, and more earneſtly pray for them! To ſee Men wilfully throwing away their Souls for a Thing of nought, and acting, as if every Thing was important but *Eternity*, what more affecting, melting Sight can there be to a pious Mind? Let us, with real, chriſtian Compaſſion, be frequently offering up ſuch Petitions as theſe, for thoſe unhappy Crea-

(c) Eccl. ix. 3.

Creatures; "O Thou, who "formedſt Souls, with a Capacity "to know, and love, and enjoy "thee for ever; and, out of thy "boundleſs Compaſſion, haſt ſent "thy dear Son to ſeek and ſave "them; to inform them of an "*eternal* Heaven and an *eternal* "Hell; pity theſe wretched Souls, "which do not pity themſelves. "Let Mercy interpoſe between "them and everlaſting Ruin. "Awaken them out of their "pleaſant Slumber, tho' it be "on the Brink of Damnation, "leſt they periſh for ever, and "there be none to deliver them." ——Are the Things, which are not ſeen, *eternal*, let us reflect,

3. How ſerious ſhould Miniſters and Parents be, in ad-

addreſſing the Souls committed to their Charge!

Bear with me, my chriſtian Friends, while, with *Eternity* in my View, I ſolemnly admoniſh myſelf and you. It is an awful Idea, which the Apoſtle gives us of the miniſterial Office, when he ſaith, *They watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give Account* (d). It is for Souls, precious, dear-bought, everlaſting Souls, they watch; and they muſt give Account to GOD of their Integrity and Zeal in their Work. How diligent and laborious ſhould Miniſters therefore be, in ſtudying the Goſpel of Chriſt, which contains the Rule of Duty, the Terms of Acceptance, and the Sanc-

(d) Heb. xiii. 17.

Sanctions of the divine Law: that they may be able to inform the ignorant; direct awakened Sinners what they must do to be saved, and encourage any serious Impressions which may appear! How careful ought they to be, to consider their Hearers as *immortal* Creatures; and not spend their sacred Hours in entertaining them with dry Criticisms, abstruse Speculations or curious Reflections, which may tickle the Ear, please the Fancy, and gain the Applause of the undiscerning, but leave their Hearts entirely untouched! How faithful should they be, in reproving those Vices, against which the *eternal* Wrath of GOD is denounced; and cautioning against those Indulgencies, by which unstable

Souls

Souls are beguiled, the Horror of Sin taken off, and the Dread of Wrath to come leſſened! With what ardent active Compaſſion ſhould they addreſs the Conſciences of Men; trying every awful Repreſentation, every tender and pathetic Remonſtrance, to make them thoughtful and religious! How ſolicitous ſhould they be to ſet the Terrors of the Lord in Array before them; to frighten them, if poſſible, out of their Indolence, and make them anxious to know, what they ſhall do to inherit *eternal* Life! Unmoved by the Folly and Uncharitableneſs of thoſe, who may ſtile them ſevere and mercileſs Preachers for ſo doing, let them imitate the Example of Chriſt and his holy Apoſtles, who diſplayed the

the Wrath to come in all its Terrors: remembering this, that, however Men may cenſure them now, it will appear at the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, that they were more merciful and compaſſionate to Souls, than thoſe who propheſy ſmooth Things, and *ſuffer Sin upon* their Fellow-Immortals (e).——How careful ſhould Miniſters be to addreſs their Hearers in a Way, that they can underſtand and feel; ſenſible, that the meaneſt of them has an immortal Soul that muſt be ſaved or damned for ever; and that there is little Proſpect of Succeſs without addreſſing to Men's Hopes and Fears: according to the Obſervation of a lively Author,

(e) Lev. xix. 17.

thor, "that all ſuch Writings "and Diſcourſes as touch no "Man, will mend no Man *". Were Miniſters to recollect, when they appear in the Pulpit, that it is poſſible ſome one, at leaſt, of their Hearers, may be attending their laſt Sermon, joining in their laſt public Prayer, ſpending their laſt Sabbath on Earth; and, before the next, may be in endleſs Joy or endleſs Woe, what a wonderful Efficacy would this have, to make them preach and pray like Men in earneſt: not like Men acting a Part, or going over a round of Services for Pay; but as thoſe who know and remember, that they and their Hearers are haſtening to an awful Account, before him who ſhall

* Mr. Pope.

ſhall judge the living and the dead. Allow us, therefore, Brethren, to deal plainly and faithfully with you; for your *eternal* Intereſt is at Stake. We could, perhaps, entertain you with ſome ſpeculative Niceties, or curious Enquiries; and this, with leſs Study and Labour than is requiſite to form ſuch Diſcourſes, as the meaneſt Capacity may underſtand, and by which dull Minds may be awakened and affected. But were we in this Inſtance to conſult our own Eaſe and Vanity, and your Amuſement, it would be cruelty to your Souls. Some of you might cenſure and reproach us for it to all Eternity, and *your Blood may be required at our Hand* (f). May GOD awa-

(f) Ezek. iii. 18.

ken all his Miniſters to be duly ſenſible of the Worth of their own Souls, and to remember, that *their own eternal* Intereſt, as well as that of their Hearers, is concerned in the Work in which they are engaged! and then — they will be indolent and trifle no more.—What hath been already ſaid under this Head ought to come with great Weight on the Minds of *chriſtian Parents*. Your Children, Sirs, are Creatures formed for Eternity. They have never-dying Souls; and theſe Souls are committed to your Charge. An awful Truſt, for which you muſt give a ſtrict Account! Have you no Concern, but about their Bodies; to feed and clothe them and put them into a Way to ſupport themſelves

ſelves in the World? You do almoſt as much as this for your Horſes and Dogs. Is it enough, think ye, to teach them polite Accompliſhments and to get Fortunes for them? I hope you think this is not enough. You teach your Children the Principles of Religion: It is well. But do they not ſee in you too much Eagerneſs about the World, and Fondneſs for Dreſs and Pleaſures? and do you not encourage theſe Diſpoſitions in them? and thus your Behaviour directly contradicts the Maxims of the Goſpel, which you teach them; and, in Effect, undoes all your Inſtructions. Let me direct you to enquire, as in the Sight of GOD, with what Serioufneſs you teach your Children, and with what Earneſtneſs you

pray for them. If you never talk to them about their Souls and *eternal* Concerns; or never appear deeply affected, when you are ſpeaking of them, how can your Children believe that they are important, or that you think them ſo? If you never pray with them alone, nor in your Families; or only in a cold, formal, lifeleſs Manner, how is it likely that GOD ſhould hear your Prayers, or your Children be the better for them? If they ſee you much elated with worldly Succeſs, and much dejected at worldly Loſſes; if they ſee you very diligent and anxious about *ſeen* and *temporal* Things, but ſhewing no Concern and Zeal about *unſeen* and *eternal* Things; what Good can you expect from them? My Bre-

Brethren, the plain Queſtion is this, have your Children immortal Souls, or have they not? If they have, it undoubtedly ought to be your firſt, your chief Care to correct thoſe ill Habits and Paſſions, which would make them Fewel for *eternal* Fire; and to cultivate and encourage thoſe good Diſpoſitions and Qualities, which will be the Seed of *eternal* Life. Remember that your Children may ſoon die, and be out of the Reach of your Inſtructions and Prayers; and if they periſh thro' your Neglect, GOD will require their Blood at your Hand. I hope you pity and pray for your Miniſters under the Weight of ſo awful a Thought. They are obliged to you for your Pity and Prayers; and they can make you

no better Return than to urge and beſeech you to pity yourſelves, and to pity your Children; and to pray for you, that GOD would excite you, by his Spirit, to a pious Care of them, and aſſiſt and ſucceed you in it. — Let me add, that *Maſters* and *Miſtreſſes* ſhould be tenderly concerned for the *eternal* Welfare of their Servants. Allow them, my Friends, Time to prepare for Eternity; eſpecially to attend public Worſhip, both Parts of every Lord's Day, if poſſible; as they have few other Advantages. Compaſſionately reprove what is amiſs in them. Direct and encourage them to be ſerious and good. Put Bibles, and plain practical Treatiſes into their Hands: and let them learn from your Inſtructi-

ons,

ons, Examples and Prayers, what they muſt do to be ſaved. The Soul of the meaneſt is unſpeakably precious. For the Souls of the pooreſt, Chriſt ſhed his Blood. There is no Diſtinction between Maſters and Servants in the World of Spirits: and to that *eternal* World you and they are haſtening; and muſt quickly ſtand together before the Tribunal of your common Maſter, with whom there is no Reſpect of Perſons. — Since the Things, that are not ſeen, are *eternal*,

4. What an awful Thing is it to die, and enter upon an *eternal* State!

One of the Fathers, with great Beauty and Propriety, calls Death "The Gate of *Eternity*."

The Death of a human Creature is his paſſing out of Time into Eternity; and what can be a more ſolemn Thing? The Death of our Fellow-Creatures around us is ſo common, that we ſeldom make any ſerious Reflections upon it. Perſons often talk of it with as much Indifference, as of any common Article of News; "and read a Play-Bill and a Bill "of Mortality with much the "ſame Senſations *." Thus, as the Pſalmiſt obſerves, *like Sheep* Men *are laid in the Grave* (g). Survivors, like Sheep, when one is taken away to be ſlaughtered, are for awhile alarmed and terrified; but, like them, they ſoon return to their Food or Diverſion, forget thoſe that are gone, and do not

* Dr. Young. (g) Pſalm xlix. 14.

not improve their Removal. With Regard to the Circumſtances of Death, there is generally one Event to the righteous and the wicked: but O, what a vaſt inconceivable Difference immediately ſucceeds it! With Regard to each, their Time of Trial is ended, and their *eternal* State commences. The righteous Man putteth off the Body with all its Cares, Temptations and Sorrows; his Soul aſcends to GOD, and enters upon everlaſting Reſt, Security and Joy. It paſſeth to a World, where all its Faculties ſhall be enlarged; where it ſhall be conformed to the Image of GOD in Holineſs, and be perfectly and unalterably happy. What a glorious and delightful Change

to a good Man! The Sinner likewiſe changes a temporal for an eternal State; but it is a State of Miſery. *When a wicked Man dieth*, ſaith *Solomon*, *his Expectation ſhall periſh, and the Hope of unjuſt Men periſheth* (h). His laſt Breath, and his laſt Hope expire together. He ſhall never hear preaching or praying any more; never receive one other Invitation of Grace, or Offer of Mercy. When a wicked Man dieth, he leaves temporal Things, which were his Portion and Happineſs, behind him. He is brought into Deſolation, as in a Moment, and utterly conſumed with Terrors. He goes to the Bar of GOD to give an Account of the Time, the Means and Advantages he has

(h) Prov. xi. 7.

hath enjoyed, and to receive his Doom. The Soul, which hath been, thro' Life, aſleep in Sin, will awake to full Vigour in another World; awake to behold its own Guilt and Wretchedneſs, as ſoon as it quits the Body. The Soul will then be all-Sight, all-Senſe, all-Ear; and its Immortality, which is now its Dignity and Priviledge above the Brutes, will be its everlaſting Miſery and Torment. This is the Portion of a wicked Man. And is it not then an awful Thing to die? You will think ſo, when the *King of Terrors* ſeizes you. A Man of Humour, in his gay Hours, wrote and publiſhed a Hiſtory of thoſe, who had died jeſting: but he ſolemnly retracted it in writing, on his Death-Bed; for he found

that Death was no jeſting Matter *. To ſee an immortal Creature dying with a Jeſt upon his Tongue, or in a ſtupid thoughtleſs Manner, or even without any well-grounded Hope, is ſurely the ſaddeſt Spectacle in the World. To think of his Removal to *everlaſting* Puniſhment, is ſurely the moſt affecting Thought, that can enter into the human Mind. *Ah! Eternity! Eternity!* ſaid a graceleſs Wretch once, dying and looking diſmally at thoſe about him; and there he ſtopt: he ſaid no more; more he could not ſay; more he need not ſay. Ponder upon this Example, and, if you dread ſuch a Death, do not lead ſuch a Life.—When we conſider that Death is the Gate

* M. Deſlandes.

Gate of *Eternity*, what a ſolemn Thing is the Death of a ſingle Perſon? But how deeply muſt every ſerious Mind be affected, to hear of hundreds, and ſometimes thouſands being hurried into *Eternity* at once, by the devouring Sword, by a Ship-wreck, or an Earthquake?——Is Death the Gate of Eternity, what a horrible Thing is Self Murder! And how little do they think of an Hereafter, who madly ruſh out of the World, in Defiance of the Authority and Appointment of the Almighty, and plunge themſelves into *everlaſting* Deſtruction to eſcape temporary Poverty, Pain or Shame?——How much Reaſon have they, who are yet in their Sins, to adore the divine Long-ſuffering and Patience,

to

to which it is owing, that they have not been long ago cut off, and consigned to the Regions of everlasting Darkness and Despair? — And what a powerful Motive should this Consideration be to us all, to be serious and thoughtful, sober and diligent, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, since *Eternity* is just before us.—Let us, my Friends, often think, what it is to die, and to what a World and State the departed Soul immediately goes. It is an *eternal*, unalterable State. It goes to one of those two awful Regions, where the Love of GOD appears in its brightest Glories, or his Vengeance in inconceivable Horrors. Think of this, when you hear of the Death of others. How natural and useful a Reflection would

would this be, "They are gone "into *Eternity!*" When you hear the ſolemn Sound of a tolling Bell, think, "There is ſome "other Soul gone into *Eternity.*" When you attend or ſee the Funeral of a Relation, Neighbour or Acquaintance, think, "His "Time is ended; he is gone to "his *eternal* Home, and fixed in "an unchangeable State." Such Thoughts and Reflections as theſe, none but Fools will endeavour to baniſh from their Minds; and none will ſneer him who expreſſeth them, but Men of the World, who have their Portion in this Life. Such Thoughts are perfectly reaſonable, highly becoming mortal Creatures, and, being of very great Advantage, ſhould always be re-

collected

collected on these Occasions. I would particularly inculcate them upon those Persons, who are most in Danger of forgetting them; I mean those, who by their Professions and Employments are often Witnesses of the last Scenes of departing Mortals, or assist at the Burial of the Dead. Their Familiarity with Sickness and Death is very apt to harden their Minds against such serious Impressions. This is generally the Case with Nurses, Undertakers and Sextons; and I fear it is often the Case with Persons of a better Education and Understanding; even Apothecaries, Physicians, and, may I not add, Divines. To such Persons I beg Leave to address what Mr. *Halyburton*, a celebrated Minister and Pro-

Profeſſor in *Scotland*, ſaid to a young Apothecary, who attended him, when he lay on his Death-Bed; "Sir, I give you "ſolemn Warning, that, if you "become hardened by the fre- "quent Sight of ſick and dy- "ing Perſons, you will be in "Danger of loſing all Senſibility "of Conſcience and being har- "dened for ever."—*Man giveth up the Ghoſt*, ſaith *Job, and where is he* (i)? intimating thereby, that a dying Creature is an Object of very ſerious Reflection. What is become of him or her, whom, but a few Days ago, we ſaw and converſed with? To what Place, to what Company, are they gone? O, what do they ſee and feel and think now? And how ſoon will the

(i) Job xiv. 10.

the Queſtion be aſked concerning me alſo, where is he? O that ſolemn awful Day, which finiſhes my Courſe, and puts an End to all the Labours of my Hand and Tongue! that Day, after which you will ſee my Face and hear my Voice no more! that infinitely important Day, when I muſt enter upon *Eternity!* —*Eternity! thou pleaſing, dreadful Thought!* Is Death juſt before me, and the unſeen World and *Eternity* following after it? Gather not my Soul with Sinners, O Lord; but grant, that I may find Mercy of the Lord in that Day.—— I ſhall conclude this Diſcourſe with the following Paſſage; which cannot, I think, fail of ſome Effect on all that hear it attentively. Secretary *Walſingham*, an

an eminent Courtier and Stateſman in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time, in his old Age retired into Privacy in the Country. Some of his former gay Companions came to ſee him, and told him he was melancholy. "No, ſaith he, "I am not melancholy; I am "ſerious; and 'tis fit I ſhould "be ſo. Ah! my Friends! "while we laugh, all Things "are ſerious round about us; "GOD is ſerious who exerciſeth "Patience towards us; Chriſt is "ſerious, who ſhed his Blood "for us; the Holy Spirit is ſeri-"ous in ſtriving againſt the Ob-"ſtinacy of our Hearts; the "holy Scriptures bring to our "Ears the moſt ſerious Things "in the World; the holy Sacra-"ments repreſent the moſt ſeri-

"ous

" ous and awful Matters; the
" whole Creation is ſerious in
" ſerving GOD and us; all that
" are in Heaven and Hell are
" ſerious: — how then can we
" be gay?"

DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

2 Corinthians iv. -18.

But the Things which are not ſeen, are ETERNAL.

While we look not at the Things which are ſeen, but at the Things which are not ſeen: for the Things which are ſeen, are temporal; but the Things which are not ſeen, are eternal.

IT is the Obſervation of a pious Writer, that "*Eternity* ſo often "paſſeth over our "Lips, that it forgets its Way "to

" to our Hearts *." We are ſo accuſtomed to the Sound of the Word, that the Thing loſes its awful Efficacy upon our Minds. Againſt this, Brethren, we muſt guard with the utmoſt Solicitude. Let me, therefore, once more, engage your diligent Attention to a Diſcourſe on *Eternity*. As GOD has graciouſly lengthened out my Time to ſpeak to you again, and yours to hear, I can ſpeak and you hear of nothing, which is of greater Moment and Importance than *Eternity*. I am the more willing to dwell upon the Subject, from a full Perſuaſion that " a " Man muſt be perfectly good, " or deſperately abandoned, or " impenetrably ſtupid, that is " not alarmed at a full, ſerious " and

* Dr. Young.

" and weighty Conſideration of " *Eternity*, an *Eternity* of Hap- " pineſs or Miſery; when, for " ought he knows, he may ſtand " juſt on the Brink of it *." Perhaps I may never ſpeak, nor you hear of it again upon Earth; let us therefore be ſerious.

I have already conſidered the general Nature of *Eternity*; illuſtrated and proved the *Immortality* of the Soul, and the *eternal* Duration of thoſe States of Happineſs and Miſery, to one or other of which, every human Soul is removed at Death. — I then repreſented to you the great Obligations we are under to GOD and the Redeemer for diſcovering to us *eternal* Things, and making Proviſion for our eſcaping *everlaſting*

* Seed's Sermons, Vol. 1. S. 1.

laſting Miſery.——I took up a Lamentation over the Folly and Madneſs of Mankind in neglecting *eternal* Concerns.—I urged upon you, who are Heads of Families, and upon myſelf, the moſt earneſt Concern for the Salvation of the immortal Souls committed to our Charge; — and I exhorted you frequently to reflect, what an awful Thing it is to die, and enter upon an eternal State. I have one Reflection more to make from this Subject, concerning a Duty, which I deſign more largely to conſider and enforce; namely,

5. How much is it our Duty and Intereſt to look-at unſeen and *eternal* Things!

Or

Or to eye and regard *Eternity* in all we do. And in diſcuſſing this Point, I ſhall conſider,—— what looking-at eternal Things includes; and then propoſe ſome Arguments and Motives to engage you more ſteadily to regard them.

I. I am to conſider, what looking-at *eternal* Things includes.

And that is,—a firm Belief of their Reality; a ſerious Conſideration of their Importance;—and ſteady Aims and Purſuits agreeable thereto.

1. Looking-at *eternal* Things implies "a firm Belief "of their Reality:"

That we have immortal Spirits within us, and that there is an *eternal* State and World juſt before us. Theſe are unſeen Things; and therefore the Eye of the Mind is to be directed to them. Faith is, as it were, that Eye; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight: and Faith is deſcribed by the Apoſtle, as the *Subſtance of Things hoped for*, and *the Evidence*, or full Conviction, *of Things not ſeen* (a). Faith aſſents to what Reaſon and Revelation diſcover concerning them. The Chriſtian profeſſeth to believe what the Scriptures reveal concerning theſe important Things; and is as ſure of their Reality, as of the Reality of any material Object, which is ſeen by his bodily

(a) Heb. xi. 1.

bodily Eyes. The Chriſtian endeavours to have this Faith ſtrengthened, by reaſoning about unſeen Things, by frequently examining the Account, which the Word of GOD gives of them, and meditating upon it. — Further, looking at them includes,

2. A ſerious Conſideration of their Importance.

The Word here tranſlated *look at*, is in other Places rendered, *take heed*, *conſider*, *mark*, or obſerve attentively; and ſignifies ſerious, fixed, repeated Conſideration (b). We are not merely to take a tranſient Glance of *eternal* Things, now and then; but to look at them with a fixed ſtedfaſt

(b) Compare Luke xi. 35. Rom. xvi. 17. Gal. vi. 1. Phil. iii. 17.

Eye, or dwell upon them by close Meditation; to bend all the Powers of the Mind to study them, as Subjects of the utmost Importance. This includes comparing Things temporary and eternal, for so, it appears from the Context, the Apostle did; considering the respective Value and Moment of each; paying no greater Regard to seen Things, than their fading, unsatisfying Nature deserves; taking the Eye of the Soul off from them, and fixing it upon unseen Things. It intimates further, that this serious Consideration of their Nature is *frequent*, and our Regard to them *habitual*. Looking at them is, as far as possible, the continued Act of the Soul; its daily Employment; and to them the Thoughts must

muſt be habitually directed. — Once more, looking-at unſeen Things includes,

3. A ſteady Aim and diligent Purſuit, agreeable to their Nature and Importance.

Or, a diligent inceſſant Care to eſcape *eternal* Miſery and ſecure *eternal* Happineſs. The Word *look-at* ſignifies alſo to *aim at* or *purſue*. It conveys this Idea in the Verſe, where our Text is; and in that Exhortation of the ſame Apoſtle, *Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man alſo on the Things of others* (c). From this Word, our engliſh Word *Scope* is derived, which ſignifies the chief Deſign a Man has in

(c) Phil. ii. 4.

View, the Mark he aims at, the End he is purſuing. This may be illuſtrated by thoſe Words of the ſame Apoſtle, *I preſs toward the Mark*; I vigorouſly purſue the Object I have my Eye upon, *for the Prize of the high Calling of* GOD *in Chriſt Jeſus*, even the eternal Inheritance (d). This, then, is our great Duty as Chriſtians, daily and ſeriouſly to conſider *eternal* Things, and uſe our utmoſt Endeavours to eſcape the Wrath to come, and obtain everlaſting Life. We are to conſider the whole of our Duration, and what is beſt for us upon the whole; what Regard is due to temporal, and what to eternal Things. Let us then maintain a ſtedfaſt, fixed Regard to *Eternity*, where-ever we are,

(d) Phil. iii. 14.

are and whatever we do. Were we deliberately to think upon temporal and eternal Things, we could never imagine that Proviſion for the preſent Life was worthy ſo many Hours' Thought and Labour every Day, and *Eternity* ſcarce worthy of half a Thought in many Hours; and perhaps not one fixed ſerious Thought in many Days. Where one Thought is ſpent upon that Queſtion, what ſhall we eat and drink, and wherewith ſhall we be clothed; how ſhall we get Money or enjoy Pleaſure; there would be a thouſand ſpent upon that Queſtion, what muſt I do to be ſaved? Did we ſeriouſly conſider but a thouſandth Part of the Joys of an eternal Heaven, and the Horrors of an eternal Hell, we ſhould never

be eaſy, till our everlaſting Intereſt was ſecure. Let the Thoughts of *Eternity*, therefore, be made familiar to our Minds. Let us endeavour to mingle them with all our Employments and Enjoyments; and eſpecially with all the Exerciſes of Religion, both publick and private.—To excite you to this, I am

II. To propoſe ſome Motives and Arguments.

And that you may be engaged to regard *Eternity* in all you do, conſider — that Life, Time and Means are given us to prepare for *Eternity*;—that we muſt very quickly enter upon it; — that, as our Character is when our Time ends, ſo will our *eternal* State be; —and that many preſent Advantages

tages will attend our looking at *eternal* Things, which will likewiſe have a great Influence upon our eternal State. Conſider,

1. Life and Time and Means are given us, that we may prepare for *Eternity*.

A Work of the greateſt Importance, that can employ our Hands, or enter into our Thoughts! When GOD formed us at firſt, he deſigned us for an everlaſting Exiſtence. Did he make us a little lower than the Angels, higher than the Brutes, and crown us with Glory and Honour, merely that we might look at *temporal* Things? Surely, He made us theſe Souls for nobler Ends, higher Employments, and

weightier Concerns, than what relate to this World. And ſhall we degrade theſe rational, immortal Natures now, and ſink them into endleſs Miſery hereafter, by employing them only about the Concerns of this World?—— Further, GOD has given us *our Time* to prepare for *Eternity*. Now is the accepted Time; the Day of Grace, when Pardon and Salvation may be obtained. He has lengthened out our Period of Trial; often raiſed us up from the Brink of the Grave, and preſerved us from fatal Accidents: and all, that he might give us a little more Time to regard *eternal* Things. And ſhall it all be ſpent about thoſe, that are *temporal?* Were we truly ſenſible of the Worth of our immortal Souls, we ſhould be more

more ſenſible of the Worth of Time, and thoſe Seaſons which GOD hath given us to train up our Souls for a bleſſed Immortality.——For the ſame End he has given us a *Variety of Means*, and Priviledges. He hath ſent his Son to diſcover Immortality and to open the Kingdom of Heaven for us. He hath ſent down his Spirit to enlighten our Underſtandings, to ſtrive with and rouſe our dull and ſtupid Souls; to convince us of Sin, of Righteouſneſs and of eternal Judgment. He hath given us his Word to be our Guide to everlaſting Glory. He hath commiſſioned Miniſters to explain and enforce his Word; to beſeech Men to be reconciled to GOD and ſecure eternal Life. We have all of us enjoyed ſeveral

hundred Sabbaths; ſome of us ſeveral thouſand; on each of which we have heard or read ſomething, that had a Tendency to direct our Thoughts to *Eternity.* Conſider how many Diſcourſes your Miniſters have taken Pains to compoſe and deliver, with a ſincere Concern to promote your everlaſting Salvation. Add to theſe, the many Admonitions of your Parents and Friends; the many Checks of Conſcience which you have felt; the many Intimations, which that inward Monitor has given you, that you were deſigned for *Eternity* and ought to make diligent Preparation for it. All theſe Means are the Gifts of GOD; they all center in this grand Deſign, to lead your Thoughts

Thoughts to Futurity; and are all kindly intended to ſave you from everlaſting Ruin. Conſider,

2. We muſt quickly go out of Time into *Eternity*.

It was an awful Viſion, which St. *John* ſaw, of an Angel ſtanding upon the Sea and upon the Earth, who lifted up his Hand to Heaven, and ſware by him who created all Things, and liveth for ever and ever, that *there ſhall be Time no longer* (e). Soon will theſe ſolemn Words be uttered concerning you and me, that *our* Time ſhall be no longer. The Imagination of Men placeth *Eternity* at a Diſtance; and therefore they forget it. They are

(e) Rev. x. 5, 6.

are convinced of the Neceſſity of preparing for *Eternity*; they are perhaps determined ſometime hence to ſet about it: But this ſecret Thought is at the Bottom of all their Neglect and Trifling, that they are not likely to die ſoon. Thus, as the Prophet expreſſeth it, *they put far away the evil Day* (f), and therefore indulge themſelves in Oppreſſion and Luxury. So the wicked Servant, in our Lord's Parable, ſaid, my Maſter delayeth his coming, and therefore he began to beat his Fellow-Servants, and eat and drink with the drunken. They think the next Summons will not be ſent to them. But to depend upon this, in an Affair of ſuch Moment, is certainly the utmoſt Folly.

(f) Amos vi. 3.

Folly. Many who argued in this abſurd Way, are long ſince in *Eternity*; and are now bewailing, and will for ever bewail, their mad Delay. We have the ſame frail Bodies, and are liable to the ſame Diſeaſes or Accidents, which hurried them out of Time, and broke-off all the wiſe Purpoſes of their Hearts. A Man that holds his Life by ſo uncertain a Tenure, can never be ſaid to be out of Danger. He that is in Time to-day, may be in *Eternity* to-morrow. There is but a ſingle Puff of Breath between us and Heaven or Hell. Everlaſting Things hang upon the ſlender Thread of human Life; and, when the Summons cometh, prepared or unprepared, you muſt go. Conſider then, ye that are

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entirely taken up with temporal Things, *that ſay, to-day or to morrow we will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a Year, and buy and ſell, and get Gain: whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow: for what is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away* (g). And will you not, then, look at *eternal* Things? Conſider further,

3. As our Character is when our Time ends, ſo will our *eternal* State be.

An *eternal* Heaven or Hell depends upon your good or ill Behaviour in this ſhort State of Trial. While you are here, there is Hope that ſome ſerious Impreſſi-

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(g) James iv. 13, 14.

ons may fix upon your Minds, and your Souls may be awakened to regard *eternal* Things. But, at Death, Hope is for ever gone. The Seaſon of Grace is over. The Sinner has no more Time for Prayer, reading, or ſerving GOD or Man. It is then too late to rectify paſt Miſtakes, to ſubdue ſinful Habits and obtain the Favour of Heaven. Time will never come again. Yeſterday will return no more. A Man may recover his Health and Eſtate, but can never recover his Time. When once the Soul is removed into *Eternity*, the Diſpoſitions and Habits, which it carried thither with it, will continue, and be a Source of everlaſting Joy or Sorrow. Between the vaſt eternal Regions there is a great

Gulf

Gulf fixed; and no Soul will ever be permitted to paſs from the one to the other. In the preſent State our Lives are chequered: there is an Alternative of Pleaſure and Pain; or they are mixed and blended together. But in *Eternity* there is no Mixture or Alternative: It is all Pleaſure, or all Pain. This Difference between the preſent and future State increaſes the Importance of what I am urging. From hence it appears, that, properly ſpeaking, there is no ſuch Thing as a *Trifle* upon Earth: every Thing is *weighty:* each Action, Word and Thought is weighty; becauſe each has an everlaſting Effect; has ſome Influence on our eternal State. Thoſe who now deride ſerious Godlineſs, as ſtrict and pre-

preciſe, and think that Miniſters make too much ado about it, will then be of another Mind. When they ſee that Men's Characters determine their future State, they will think that all was, comparatively, too much, that was employed about *temporal* Things, and all too little, that was employed about *eternal* ones.—— Conſider, once more,

4. Many preſent and great Advantages will attend our looking-at *eternal* Things:

Advantages, which will have a powerful Effect upon our preſent Temper and Character, and conſequently on our *eternal* State: and they are theſe; ——looking-at and regarding *Eternity* will re-

reſtrain our Fondneſs for the World; — increaſe our Hatred of Sin; — and Love to GOD and the Redeemer; — It will make us careful to redeem our Time; — promote our Patience under Afflictions; — make us ſerious and lively in all the Duties of Religion; — diſpoſe us to do good to others; and — make us willing to die. Let me juſt touch upon each of theſe Thoughts.

Looking at eternal Things will "reſtrain your Fond-"neſs for the World;"

Its Riches, Honours and Pleaſures: for it will ſhew you that they are all temporary, fading and deceitful. This will teach you to follow your worldly Buſineſs with Moderation; ſenſible that

that you have more important Buſineſs to mind. It will abate your Love of Money and Eagerneſs to gain it. You will not be elated with the Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments of Life, which you muſt leave all behind you; which, in themſelves, will be of no Avail to your eternal Happineſs, but on the contrary render it extreamly hazardous.——It will abate your Fondneſs for the Honours and Applauſe of the World, and all thoſe Marks of Diſtinction and Pre-eminence, after which little Minds are ſo eager. In this View when a new Pope is inſtalled, an Officer is appointed to approach him and ſay, "Holy "Father, think of the Days of "*Eternity*." The Honours of this World cannot ſilence a clamorous

rous Conſcience, or avert or ſuſpend the Poſſeſſor's eternal Doom. A great Man of a neighbouring Country had an extraordinary Mark of Diſtinction and Honour ſent him by his Prince, as he lay on his Death-Bed. "Alas! "(ſays he, looking coldly upon it) "this is a mighty fine Thing "here in this Country: but I "am juſt going to a Country, "where it will be of no Service "to me." So trifling will all the Honours of Earth appear to the Man who has *Eternity* in his Eye! —— In like Manner it will reſtrain your Fondneſs for the Diverſions and Amuſements of Life. You will reliſh, yea will need, very few of them. You will have better Things to mind; nobler Objects to purſue, and

and taſte Pleaſures in the Purſuit which will be rational, manly, refined; which will improve upon Reflection and laſt for ever. A Lady of this Nation, having ſpent the Afternoon and Evening at Cards and in gay Company, when ſhe came home, found her Servant-Maid reading a pious Book; She looked over her Shoulder and ſaid "Poor "melancholy Soul! what Plea-"ſure canſt thou find in poring "ſo long upon that Book?" That Night the Lady could not ſleep, but lay ſighing and weeping very much: her Servant aſked her, once and again what was the Matter? At length ſhe burſt out into a Flood of Tears, and ſaid, "Oh! it was one Word I ſaw "in your Book that troubles me;

"there

" there I saw that Word *Eter-*
" *nity*. Oh! how happy should I
" be, if I were prepared for *Eter-*
" *nity!*" The Consequence of this Impression was, that she laid aside her Cards, forsook her gay Company and set herself seriously to prepare for another World. The Thoughts of *Eternity* would lead us chearfully to sacrifice any temporal Gain, Honour or Pleasure to the Welfare of the never-dying Soul. Again,

Looking at eternal Things will " increase our Ha-
" tred of Sin."

This evil Thing threw the Angels out of Heaven; it degrades the human Soul; defaces the Image of GOD upon it; deprives it of *eternal* Bliss, and plunges

plunges it into *everlaſting* Torments. Did you eye *Eternity*, you would never hearken to the Counſels of the Wicked, nor comply with other Temptations to Sin. You would at once recollect, that, tho' Sin may appear pleaſant, its Pleaſures are but for a Seaſon, and its Wages is *eternal* Death. You would be reſolute in denying worldly Luſts, crucifying the Fleſh, and laying aſide the Sin, which eaſily beſets you, tho' it be as difficult and painful as cutting off a right Hand or plucking out an Eye; conſidering, that it is better enter into Life, halt or maimed or blind, than having two Eyes or Hands to be caſt into *everlaſting* Fire (h). One ſerious Thought of *Eternity*

F would

(h) Mat. xviii. 8.

would baniſh thoſe vain Excuſes, which we are apt to make for Conformity to the World, and venturing on the Appearance of Evil.

This would "increaſe our "Love to GOD and the "Redeemer."

It would excite and cheriſh the moſt grateful and affectionate Emotions in our Hearts towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and GOD, even our Father, who have loved us, and given us everlaſting Conſolation, and good Hope thro' Grace: and in Proportion to the Solidity and Livelineſs of our Hope, it would fill us with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory. Again,

Looking at eternal Things would "make us very "careful to redeem our "Time." We

We ſhould then ſee that Time is ineſtimably precious; beyond the Price of Silver and Gold, of Pearls and Jewels. It would humble us before GOD, that ſo much has been miſpent already, and awaken us to ſeize and improve every Moment for GOD and *Eternity* —Further,

It would "promote our "Patience under Afflic- "tions, and reconcile us "to thoſe we feel or "ſee."

It was St. *Paul*'s Regard to *eternal* Things, which kept him from fainting under his grievous Sufferings, as he obſerves in the Verſes before the Text. Such a Conſideration of Futurity would tend to reconcile our Minds to

the unequal Diſtributions of Providence, and thoſe Indignities and Pains, which ſome of the beſt Men ſuffer, and ſome of the worſt eſcape. Carry your Thoughts into *Eternity*, and you will ſee theſe ſeeming Diſorders rectified, and the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of GOD appearing moſt illuſtrious. You will ſee the proſperous Sinner lamenting his Proſperity, and the afflicted Saint praiſing GOD for his Afflictions. And indeed, it is comparatively a little Matter to an immortal Being, whether he ſuffers Affliction or enjoys Proſperity, during the few Years he ſpends on Earth. To a Soul that eyes *Eternity*, his Afflictions will appear Mercies, as being intended to make his Heart better, to preſerve

ſerve him from everlaſting Pain, and make him meet for everlaſting Pleaſure. The Thought of *Eternity* has reconciled many pious Perſons to very heavy Sorrows. That divine Man, Mr. *Philip Henry*, when he felt the moſt acute Pain from a complicated Fit of the Stone and Cholick, ſaid, *I am tormented, but, bleſſed be* GOD, *not in* this *Flame. I am on Fire; but bleſſed be* GOD, *it is not the Fire of Hell.* Another pious Miniſter after he had uttered many doleful Groans, thro' the Agony of his Pain from the Stone, ſaid to his Friends, *Well! for all this roaring and groaning, I would not, for ten thouſand Worlds, change Conditions with the healthieſt richeſt Man upon Earth, who is enſlaved to Sin and going*

down to Hell. A wiſe Man would bear any bodily Pain to eſcape everlaſting Pain, and ſuffer any temporal Loſs, rather than loſe his Soul. No Man can endure ſuch heavy Afflictions on Earth, but *eternal* Happineſs will amply compenſate them. Further,

Regarding *Eternity* would
" make us ſerious and
" lively in all the Duties
" of Religion."

A celebrated Painter among the Ancients, being aſked why he took ſo much Pains about ſome Pieces he had in Hand? anſwered, " I am painting for Eternity." Did Men conſider, that they are working for *Eternity* in every Thing they do of the religious Kind, it would put Life and Vigour

gour into all their Actions. Did they reflect, that in their Prayers, they are aſking the *eternal* Life of their Souls, they would pray with greater Attention, Serioufneſs and Fervor than, it is to be feared, they generally do. No formal lifeleſs Petitions would proceed from their Lips, but their Hearts would be engaged as well as their Tongues. Under the Influence of this Thought, what ſerious devout Worſhippers would they be in the Houſe of GOD! We ſhould not ſee them habitually coming in after the Service of it is begun, or perhaps half done; they would not behave irreverently there, or appear unattentive to what is ſaid. They would not allow themſelves to ſleep, when they ſhould be hearing the Words

of *eternal* Life; nor would they neglect any Opportunity of improving their Hearts by religious Worſhip. They would not go away, as they too often do, without any Self-Reflection, or conſidering how much they were concerned in what they had been hearing; ſince by the Word of GOD their Characters are ſoon to be tried, and their *eternal* State unalterably fixed. Were you, my Brethren, to regard *Eternity*, you would every Day cloſely examine the State of your Souls, and watch their ſecret Workings and Deſires. You would be active in all your Endeavours to ſerve GOD, and grow in Grace; and would never be ſatisfied with any cold doubtful Hope, when *Eternity* was in queſtion. Were Chriſtians

tians to think and ſpeak and act under a deep Impreſſion of *Eternity*, there would be no trifling with GOD, and Conſcience, and ſacred Things. Their great Ambition would be to pleaſe GOD, and their chief Aim, to ſave their Souls, and faithfully to improve all the Helps they have for that Purpoſe.

Looking at *eternal* Things would "diſpoſe and "quicken us to do all "the Good we could to "the Souls of others."

It would lead us to pity periſhing Souls, and be active in our Attempts to ſave them. It would make us tenderly ſolicitous to try every Method to reach their Hearts; yea, to *ſave them with Fear, pulling them* as *out of the*

Fire (i). We ſhould be earneſt in our Prayers to GOD for them, and unwearied in our Endeavours to preſerve them from everlaſting Ruin. In order to this, we ſhould be often dropping a Hint concerning *Eternity*; ſince, if any Thing will awaken a Man to be ſerious and thoughtful, that will. We ſhould exhort and admoniſh one another daily, while it is called to-day, leſt any be hardened by the Deceitfulneſs of Sin, and ſo be ſuddenly deſtroyed, and that without Remedy.——I add, once more,

Habitual Regards to *Eternity* would "make us "willing to die."

(i) Jude *v.* 23.

Death

Death and *Eternity* are awful Scenes: they ſtrike the Mind with Horror. The Soul ſhrinks at the Thought of removing to an *unſeen* and *eternal* State. But Familiarity with theſe Scenes, if attended with ſerious Reflections upon them, will gradually abate their Terror; as it will promote thoſe Diſpoſitions in the Heart, which are a good Preparative for entering upon them. We ſhall then be ſenſible that it is a Matter of very little Importance when, and where, and how a Perſon dies: the great Thing is, to what State Death removes him. This would excite us to apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom; to labour and pray for brighter Evidences and firmer Hopes of poſſeſſing *eternal* Reſt; and as theſe were obtained

tained, our Fears of Death would abate. We ſhould no longer ſhudder on the Brink of *Eternity*, but chearfully reſign our Souls into his Hands, who died to redeem them; who has engaged to keep that which is committed to him againſt that Day, and who has the Keys of Death and the unſeen World.

Theſe, my Brethren, are ſome of the great Advantages of looking at *unſeen and eternal Things*. And O that theſe Motives may engage you to direct your Eyes to them; to entertain ſome ſerious Thoughts of *Eternity* every Day, and lie down every Night with an Impreſſion of it upon your Spirits! May they lead you to recollect, where-ever you go, and whatever you are doing, that you are on the

the Brink of an awful *Eternity!* You may perhaps object, that "it is a gloomy Subject, and will "ſpoil your Pleaſures." But here you miſtake. It will indeed ſpoil your ſinful and dangerous Pleaſures; and ſo I would have it: but it will ſpoil no innocent, rational, ſolid Pleaſures. It is aſtoniſhing how any Man can be chearful, who neglects the Intereſt of his Soul and forgets *Eternity*. *Delight is not ſeemly for a Fool* (k); and no Fool ſo great as he. True Joy does not belong to him. He has no Title to it, no Reliſh for it. True Pleaſure is a *ſerious* Thing. Tho' the Ways, in which I would perſuade you to walk, may at firſt appear gloomy, they will brighten as you proceed: you

(k) Prov. xix. 10.

you will ſoon find, that they are Ways of Pleaſantneſs and Paths of Peace; and will at length undoubtedly concur in this Sentiment, that "ſince all other "Poſſeſſions and Attainments are "vain and periſhable, the only "true Wiſdom is to meditate "upon *Eternity*, and the beſt "Philoſophy is to be a good "Man *."

And now, my Friends, I have finiſhed what I intended on this weighty and moſt intereſting Subject; and I do earneſtly intreat you to take a ſerious and careful Review of it, and aſk yourſelves, O my Soul, art thou prepared for *Eternity*? And yet I fear, after all that you have heard upon the Subject, ſome of you continue un-

* Rapin's Crit. Works, Vol. 2, p. 509.

unaffected and unimpreſſed with it; that you will go on in your accuſtomed Round of Buſineſs and Amuſement, without conſidering the *eternal* World, on the Borders of which you ſtand, and into which you may, in an Inſtant, be hurried. Nay, I cannot but fear, that ſome of you may have ſo little regarded what has been ſaid, as to go immediately from hence to ſome Place of publick Reſort, to your Walks, or your Viſits, as if you ſtudied to drive away all ſerious Thought; and may to-morrow have forgotten even the Subject, upon which I have been addreſſing you. But I muſt again warn you, that *Eternity* is at hand, whether you regard it or no. I am unwilling to conclude, till I have ſome Hope,

that

that you will prepare for *Eternity*; at leaſt will conſider it. Let me therefore beg one Favour of every one of you, young and old, rich and poor; and it is but a ſmall Favour I aſk; it is this, that you would every one retire, and ſpend a little Time this Evening in thinking upon *Eternity*. Ponder in your Minds, what it is to live for ever, in a State of endleſs Happineſs or endleſs Miſery. If you will do this, I ſhall have a chearful Hope, that one Quarter of an Hour ſo ſpent, will be the moſt profitable you ever ſpent in your Lives; and that GOD will make the Meditation profitable to your Souls, and the beginning of eternal Felicity. But if you will not do this much, in an Affair of ſuch vaſt Moment, I can

ſay

ſay nothing that will awaken and impreſs you. Thou, O my GOD, art Witneſs, and all ye that fear GOD are Witneſſes, that I have given thoughtleſs, dying Creatures plain and faithful Warning of the Nature and Approach of *Eternity*; and your own Conſciences, O careleſs, ſtupid Mortals, will bear Witneſs for me in the Day of eternal Judgment, that you were fore-warned. You will then recollect that you were again and again addreſſed upon this Subject: you will deſire to forget it *then*, but will not be able. May the Spirit of GOD, for whom nothing is too hard, ſo impreſs theſe Things upon your Hearts *now*, that the Recollection of them *then* may be joyful and not tormenting to you.

I have

I have a chearful Perſuaſion, that ſome of you, Brethren, are impreſſed with theſe Repreſentations, and will apply your Minds more cloſely than before, to the great Concerns of *Eternity*; that you will daily keep all the Powers of your Souls wakeful and active, in order to ſecure ſo vaſt a Felicity, as the Goſpel promiſeth. I hope likewiſe that you will, by every friendly Effort, endeavour to ſave the Souls of your Relations and Acquaintance. For this Purpoſe, may *the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your Spirits. Amen* (l). To conclude;

If I thought it needful to make an Apology to an Aſſembly of Immortals, for dwelling ſo long upon the Subject of *Eternity*, and being

(l) Gal. vi. 18.

being earneſt in my Addreſs to them, that Apology ſhould be no other, than the Anſwer, which a pious Man once made to this Queſtion from his Friend, "Why "do you ſpend ſo much Time "in Reading Meditation and "Prayer?" The good Man lifted up his Eyes and Hands to Heaven, and ſaid, with great Seriouſneſs and Solemnity, *For ever! For ever! For ever!*

THE END.

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